

## WHAT IS INITIATIVE LAW?

President Says It Is Means of People Getting What Laws They Want Passed.



WOODROW WILSON.

An Argument for Popular Government. Prepared by Missouri Popular Government League.

The initiative and referendum was adopted by Missouri in 1908, after 13 years of struggle.

"The initiative," says Woodrow Wilson, "is a means of seeing to it that measures which the people want shall be passed, when legislatures delay or ignore public opinion. The referendum is a means of seeing to it that the unrepresentative measures which they do not want shall not be placed upon the statute book."

The means used by the people to get what they want is a petition which, when signed by a certain per cent of the voters, requires that the question be voted upon and decided by the people.

Attacks upon the initiative and referendum were expected, of course. The forces of privilege, who are accustomed to buying the laws they need, do not give up easily. They were soiled lined up against this new weapon of the people from 1895 to 1908, while the people were fighting for it. When the law was passed, in 1908, they said it meant "mob rule" and that the common people would turn things upside down.

No such thing happened. The referendum never has been used until this year, and every measure on which the initiative has been applied since 1908 has been defeated. There has, therefore, been no case of "mob rule." So the enemies of the initiative and referendum have been compelled to carry on the fight to kill it in Missouri without the "mob rule" argument.

The way they are now fighting is this: They have offered an "amendment" to our initiative and referendum law. This so-called "amendment" places obstacles in the way of the initiative. It contains two easy methods of defeating a petition signed by the people, by preventing it from being filed. Any one judge or any one county clerk can kill the petition in the entire state by killing it in his county. It also limits the people's power on four important subjects in order to capture the votes of the people opposed to those subjects. It is a clever scheme because its purpose is hidden, and it pretends to be a friendly amendment. But the people of Missouri are not to be fooled so easily. The farmers want the initiative and referendum. So do the working class in the cities. Only the "big interests" are opposed to it, and as surely as the people learn to understand amendment No. 1 they will vote against it.

The proposal that the people may have the right to govern themselves in everything except taxation, is like giving a man his entire freedom except for a ball and chain on his leg. The people may decide all the little questions for themselves—Amendment No. 1 takes the big question out of their hands. That is the question of taxation.

**AMENDMENT NO. 1. DISHONEST**  
Contains Two Jokers Aimed to Defeat Its Supposed Purpose—Real Attack is on Initiative.

An Argument for Popular Government. Prepared by Missouri Popular Government League.

Amendment No. 1, to be voted on Nov. 3, 1914, is an attack upon the initiative and referendum law now in force in Missouri.

This attack comes thinly disguised as an amendment. Whether honestly or dishonestly intended, its real effect is that of an assault upon democracy. It would make our initiative and referendum ineffective.

This amendment contains dangerous proposals. If adopted it will rob the people of Missouri of their most efficient instrument of self-government, an instrument which in five short years has driven bribery from our state legislature and has practically ridden it of lobbyists.

It is called "Proposition to Repeal Section 57, Article 4, Constitution of Missouri, in reference to initiative and referendum."

Why should it be amended? The initiative law we now have is perfectly satisfactory. It gives the people power which they have never abused. Why, then, should it be amended?

The answers to this question are: First—This is not an honest attempt to amend. It contains two vicious jokers to defeat its supposed purpose. One of them is a clause that gives the county clerk the right to hold petitions up to 90 days before election, and requires the county judge to certify them 90 days before election. This ought to be regarded by the people of Missouri as a joke—and a very bad and dangerous one. The other joker is that petitions may be thrown out if they contain any false signatures. Under this plan we could never hope to rid the state of any evil, because it is always possible for the enemy to put a few false signatures on any petition and thereby kill it. The proper proceeding is for false signatures to be thrown out, just as illegal votes are thrown out, and the offenders put in jail.

Second—The initiative and referendum law in force is a good one. That is why it is being attacked by enemies in disguise.

Third—It annuls the people's power on four important subjects by forbidding the people to vote on them. The most important of these forbidden subjects is county option in taxation. Counties will be compelled perpetually to submit to unjust tax laws imposed by the rest of the state.

Fourth—If the people consent to limit their power on four lines the interests behind Amendment No. 1 know that it will be easy to limit their power in everything else. Thus this amendment will open the way for the complete destruction of popular government.

### JOKERS IN AMENDMENT NO. 1

Seeks to Modify Fair and Efficient Laws Until They Become Unfair and Inefficient.

An Argument for Popular Government. Prepared by Missouri Popular Government League.

A very powerful argument against the proposed amendment to the Missouri initiative and referendum law is that in it the new PROVISIONS FOR FILING PETITIONS ARE FAULTY, PERHAPS INTENTIONALLY SO, while these provisions are perfectly satisfactory in the law as it now stands.

The joker in this amendment is in its provisions for filing and verifying petitions.

Consider for a moment whether this could possibly be the result of accident.

In the first framing of a bill many deficiencies are likely to creep in, against the wishes of the authors, and no sensible person will hold the authors guilty of anything save carelessness, unless the contrary be clearly shown.

But when a law is fair and efficient on a certain point, and it is thereafter plainly modified to become unfair and to afford an easy entrance for error, is it not reasonable to suppose that the alteration was made with a crafty and wicked design?

And when these alterations are made so as to present an easy opportunity for obstruction, not only to the county clerk of each county, but also to the judges, is not the guilt plain enough?

And when, after this, the same modifications of the original are made in two parts of the amendment, does not the crime against good faith and common honesty become conclusive?

This does not necessarily imply that the members of the state legislature who voted in favor of the amendment are dishonest. It applies to the interests behind the amendment who are responsible for its appearance. The members of the legislature who voted to submit this amendment unwittingly fell into the trap set by the enemies of the initiative and referendum. One state senator declared on the floor of the senate that he saw the injury the measure would work upon the initiative and referendum, but was obliged to vote for it on account of a pledge before election. A large number of other state legislators made the same statement privately. The result is that the power of the people is seriously threatened. The trap has been successfully set and the principle of the initiative is in danger as a result.

### NO AMENDMENT NECESSARY

Initiative Amendment Contains Clause Which Will Defeat Its Supposed Purpose.

An Argument for Popular Government. Prepared by Missouri Popular Government League.

Amendment No. 1 should be defeated because IT CONTAINS A VICIOUS JOKER TO DEFEAT ITS SUPPOSED PURPOSE.

Certainly none but a rascal or madman will knowingly vote in favor of any law that contains a clause to defeat itself. Such an action is abhorrent to every true citizen. Yet that is precisely what this amendment contains in the three places.

Under the existing law initiative petitions are required to be filed with the secretary of state four months before the election. Under the proposed amendment the petitions signed in each county are required to be filed with the clerk of the county court four months before election, and the clerk must present them to the court within 30 days thereafter, and the court shall file the petitions with the secretary of state at least three months before election.

The practical working of this plan, with a hostile clerk and court, is easy to see. If for any reason the petitions should not be filed with the clerk until four months before the election he could, of course, hold them until the last day of the 30 days

given him, and then it would be physically impossible for the court to check up the signatures and get the petitions to the secretary of state three months before election. But if the petitions could be filed earlier with the clerk the finding of a false signature might release the court from all obligation to send the petition to the secretary of state. As the enemies of any measure could easily procure one or more illegal signatures in each county and advise the court thereof, or the court might by failure to sit or otherwise neglect to take timely action, it is clear enough that this amendment, if adopted, would make the initiative a dead letter as to all measures not approved by even a few county courts and their clerks.

It smells to heaven. It is a libel upon the credulity of mankind, a studied insult to the people of Missouri who have dared assert their sovereignty. It is a bad, bold attempt to seduce the real rulers of the state into hindering their own hands and locking themselves in their own prisons. Every citizen should vote against it.

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No mass at Pilot Knob or Graniteville on the third or fifth Sundays of the month.

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The South half of the Southeast Quarter of Section twenty-four and the North half of the Northwest Quarter of Section twenty-five, all in Township thirty-three North of Range four East, containing one hundred and sixty acres, more or less.

Which conveyance was made in trust to secure the payment of one certain promissory note and interest thereon, referred to in said deed of trust; and, whereas, the said note and interest referred to in said deed of trust are now past due and remain unpaid;

Now, therefore, public notice is hereby given that at the request of the legal holder of said note, and in pursuance of the conditions in said deed of trust contained, the undersigned Trustee, named in said deed of trust, will sell the property above described at public vendue, to the highest bidder, for cash, at the east front of the house door in the City of Iron, County of Iron, State of Missouri, on

Saturday, the 3d day of October, 1914, between the hours of nine o'clock A. M. and five o'clock P. M., for the purpose of satisfying said indebtedness and the cost of executing this trust.

A. HUFF, Trustee.  
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